

Welcome.

Come as you are. Well, you're already here. We don't care what clothes you wear or what kind of shape your spiritual life is in. God meets you and loves you where you are.

Pray Ground. The "Pray Ground," is for littles and their parents to land and wiggle. If there is great weeping and gnashing of teeth? Take to the hallway outside the worship space. We'll pray for you. :)

Communion. You are welcome, without exception. If you are hungry and thirsty for unbounded grace, mercy, and forgiveness through Jesus Christ, you are welcome at Christ's table.

Connection Cards. For visitors and regulars to communicate. We won't use your info to bother you. We promise.



Scan this code to give a financial gift to River of Hope. Or use the giving station at the back of the worship space.

Christmas Eve 2017

River of HOPE

LUTHERAN CHURCH

We go out to transform lives through Jesus Christ.

COME

...to the manger

Dear Hopeful Ones,

Are you in church for the first time in a long time? We are so glad you're here. Seriously. No snark, I promise. Maybe you think this life of being a Christian is not for you, that following Jesus is for the weak or for those who are power hungry. Christians have a pretty bad reputation and often demonstrate entitlement above others. But the deal is this: following Jesus is not an exercise in strong moral character or feeling superior to others. Following Jesus is not about seeking power. It's all upside down. Jesus was born in the most vulnerable state: as a human baby. Totally helpless and dependent upon his mother and father who were young, poor Jews. Following Jesus is about dying to your own power so that you can love and serve others through the power of God through Jesus Christ. Maybe you're the kind who looks for evidence-based, science-based facts in order to do something. But when it comes to faith, well, those things get turned inside out. They aren't thrown out, but trying to prove faith isn't faith at all.

Here at River of Hope, we believe that faith is a life long thing and that it is not dependent upon your strength. We believe that Jesus comes to you, no matter what. No matter your failures or achievements. No matter the state of your heart. We believe Jesus does the work to meet you wherever you are and love you. We believe that God sending Jesus to this world is a sign of radical welcome to all people: enemies, friends, GLBTQ, straight, divorced, people who look nothing like you do and live in different ways than you. And on and on and on. To say God loves diversity is an understatement. God created (and is created) it. God is way more imaginative than we are when it comes to the population of the earth and all creation.

So we are glad that tonight you have come to the manger, whatever has brought you through these doors. Rejoice! The Savior has come for the likes of you and me. It's a miracle. Merry Christmas.

Laura Aase

Pastor and Mission Developer of River of Hope

Connecting God's story and our story.

Make time to read the Christmas story over these days of Christmas.

Luke 2:1-20

The Birth of Jesus

In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. ²This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. ³All went to their own towns to be registered. ⁴Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. ⁵He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. ⁶While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. ⁷And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

The Shepherds and the Angels

⁸In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. ⁹Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. ¹⁰But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: ¹¹to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. ¹²This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger." ¹³And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying,

¹⁴"Glory to God in the highest heaven,
and on earth peace among those whom he favors!"

¹⁵When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us." ¹⁶So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger. ¹⁷When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child; ¹⁸and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them. ¹⁹But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. ²⁰The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

Our purpose as a church:

We go out to transform lives through Jesus

Our Guiding Principles:

(Disciple = learner)

God is God and we are not.

We are called to grow together as disciples: to forgive, to teach, to love.

Disciples are inspired by the Holy Spirit to take risks.

Disciples seek God's justice.

Disciples serve with no strings attached.

Disciples invite and welcome through loving acceptance.

We meet you where you are.



**IF YOU KEEP UP WITH BRANDS,
THEN YOU SHOULD KNOW WE
ARE PART OF THE
EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN
CHURCH IN AMERICA (ELCA).
WE'RE PRETTY PLEASED ABOUT
THIS.**